

South Bascom - Overall Workshop Summaries

On October 24th, 2012, over 40 community members participated in the first South Bascom Urban Village plan community workshop. The workshop was the first in a series of three community outreach meetings geared towards engaging the community in the South Bascom Urban Village planning process. Participants included neighborhood residents, property owners, and other individuals interested in gaining insight into the Urban Village planning process.

The workshop began with a presentation given by staff on Urban Villages and the Urban Village planning process. At the end of the presentation, participants broke out into groups. Within the groups, participants were asked their perception of the assets within the neighborhood and the opportunities that exist. Additionally, there were discussions about a future vision for the neighborhood and the height of development along the corridor. The final task for participants was to use Lego, which represented the projected development and population growth as outlined in the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan, to construct where they thought new development should be planned. Each table was provided with a large map of the study area and a bag of Lego. Each bag of Lego corresponded to the projected population growth and development allotted for that particular Urban Village.

The following day, staff held an additional workshop for the South Bascom Urban Village to accommodate additional interested community members unable to attend the previous workshop. The workshop followed the same format as the first day.

The general sentiment amongst workshop participants was that change needs to occur in this area. Many of the participants believe that there tremendous opportunity for this Urban Village, especially with prominent established community assets such as the Valley Medical Center, San Jose City College, Los Gatos Creek Trail, and the Valley Transit Authority (VTA) light rail stop, and encouraged reinvestment and development in the area.

Assets in the Urban Village:

The main community assets mentioned at the workshop were the Valley Medical Center and San Jose City College. These institutions are not only seen as assets in the community but many of the workshop participants suggested using these as a catalyst for complimentary developments and businesses in the area.

The Los Gatos Creek Trail is also looked at as a significant asset in the community but many participants suggested that there could be better access and connections to this recreational amenity.

Opportunities:

There was a general consensus amongst workshop groups that the parcel of land with the most opportunity for development was the former Dick's Center Site. This site is currently underutilized and with a largely revolving door tenancy. The property is a rather large parcel of land located in an ideal location that is adjacent adjacent to the VTA light rail stop.

Another identified opportunity site was the San Jose Water Company property located on South Bascom Avenue. The large lot is a potential opportunity for a future mixed use project consisting of office, residential and retail.

One of the assets in the community that participant felt was underutilized was the Urban Village's proximity to Ebay offices. Currently, there is no connection between Ebay and the Urban Village, but if connectivity increased, Ebay employees could add to the available retail base to the Urban Village.

Open space is something that participants mentioned was in demand in the area. One specific idea that came up in the workshop was the addition of parks in the area that have playing fields or other types of recreational amenities.

Another opportunity is for streetscape improvements on South Bascom Avenue. Currently the street is eight lanes wide at some points creating an inhospitable pedestrian environment. One of the major opportunities is to remove lanes on South Bascom Avenue and create a complete street with bike lanes, pedestrian improvements and the addition of street trees and other landscaping. There were also similar discussions about pedestrian improvements on Fruitdale Avenue.

Heights:

Participants were concerned with how new development would be fit into the existing context and built form of the neighborhood. Of particular concern was the interface between new development and adjacent existing single family residential neighborhoods. Participants were supportive of building heights exceeding what currently exists in the neighborhood provided that mitigation measures in design and architecture are taken in areas close to the existing single family homes.

One property that was singled out as being ideal for taller development, potentially even towers, was the former Dick's Center lot. Due to the size of the lot, proximity to light rail and distance from existing single family homes furthered the idea that the property would be an ideal location for future increased density and taller buildings.

Land Use:

Generally, participants were supportive of the addition of commercial and residential uses. Some participants thought that office uses were well suited for the Urban Village, especially near Valley Medical Center and San Jose City College where medical offices and other health related uses could be clustered. Conversely, there were some participants who thought that new uses should be solely retail and residential, while others questioned the success of new retail considering the existing commercial vacancies on the corridor.

As for residential, generally, the groups were supportive of residential development, especially near the light rail station and in the southern section of the Urban Village.

Table #1

Assets:

The Valley Transit Authority light rail stop is located at the southern edge of the Urban Village boundary.

The Urban Village is located in close proximity to Santana Row and Ebay.

The Los Gatos Creek Trail is located in the southern section of the Urban Village.

Opportunities:

- Due to the close proximity of South Bascom and Santana Row, South Bascom could draw visitors from Santana Row.
- Currently Bascom Avenue is too wide, the street could be made narrower and other streetscape features such as crosswalks could be added.
- The boundary of the Urban Village could be adjusted to include the parcels of land north of the Valley Medical Center and south of 280.
- The VTA light rail station would make an excellent node and focal point in the Urban Village.
- An improved pedestrian connection between Ebay and the Urban Village.
- Improved bicycle connection to the Los Gatos Creek trail.

Land use:

- The plan should utilize existing assets, such as Valley Medical Center and San Jose City College as catalysts for new developments.
- There needs to be more density to actually make change happen in this area.
- Bascom Avenue is too large. It carries all the traffic from elsewhere.
- There is not much in the Urban Village that needs to be preserved. The street could change a lot.
- There should be a dedicated bus lane down Bascom Avenue.
- There should not be more retail than the market can handle. This causes storefront vacancies which detract from the street.
- Parking should be focused in central parking areas.
- It's a long street so it should be broken up into smaller, more walkable nodes.
- Create nodes along the corridor, particularly near Valley Medical Center and Dick's Center.
- Make sure the Bascom Community Center isn't buried in development. Utilize the community center as a prominent, centralizing feature.
- Attract entertainment such as performing arts.
- The City should provide incentives to property owners to develop.
- The street is too long to develop all of it. There should be nodes of activity with connectors between them that allow people to walk to each one.
- Less surface parking, more structured and underground parking.
- The open space across from the community center would be a great location for a park.



Growth strategy:

Table #1 focused most of their growth into two nodes: the south and the north end of the corridor. At the south ends of the corridor. At the north end of the corridor, the table chose to place mixed-use midrise development with ground floor retail residential above near Valley Medical Center and San Jose City College. At the north end of the corridor, the table used the VTA light rail stop as a catalyst for higher density mixed use development with retail and office space on the ground floor and residential above it. Throughout the corridor there are areas where Table One built midrise office towers in key places. Parks are interspersed throughout the corridor but are mainly focused in the center where it appears the table would like to see a community hub that includes a performing arts center.

Table #2

Assets:

- Valley Medical.
- Bascom Community Center.
- The office building at 900 S. Bascom.
- VTA Light rail stop.
- Los Gatos Creek Trail.
- The width of South Bascom Avenue.

Opportunities:

- The lot currently owned by San Jose Water Company.
- There should be a grocery store in the area.
- A community center like a YMCA, with a pool.
- Transit oriented development on Dick's Center lot.
- Office, residential and green space.
- Expand the boundaries to include the residential buildings north of Valley Medical.
- There is potential for tall buildings on east side of South Bascom between Leon and Stokes.

Vision for Urban Village:

- Valley Medical as a hub for medical related offices.
- More bicycle connections to the Los Gatos Creek Trail.
- Residential near the light rail stop.

Discussion about height:

- Higher on the east side of the street.
- Tall near light rail station.
- Tall on the lots facing Bascom beside the City College.

Exercise:

- The vacant lot by the Bascom community center could be turned into playing fields like Campbell Community Center with soccer leagues and public use space.
- Office and assisted living residential to support hospital.
- Residential on San Jose Water Company lands with ground floor retail.
- Reduced parking to promote walking on the corridor.
- Linear park along South Bascom.



Growth strategy:

Table #2 was, for the most part, in favor of a lot of new development for the corridor. One area where the table focused most of their growth was near the VTA light rail station. In this area, the table chose to locate a significant amount of mixed-use development. The table envisioned this area to contain high rise residential towers with ground floor retail open green space around the buildings and a parking structure contained within the development. Another area where Table #2 chose to locate residential development was on Fruitdale Avenue, just off of the South Bascom corridor. In this area, the table constructed mid-rise residential complexes. In fact much of the south end of the South Bascom corridor was dedicated to residential whereas the north end of the corridor was dedicated to office development and other commercial development that would integrate well the Valley Medical Center. This group located and designed their parks and open space in a linear fashion along the corridor but predominantly in the southern end.

Table #3

Assets:

- Valley Medical Center.
- San Jose City College.

Opportunities:

- The corridor needs more trees.
- Connect the corridor to the Los Gatos trail.
- Add pedestrian connections, crosswalks and bicycle lanes.
- Additional street lighting.
- More stop signs.
- Remove traffic signals.
- Improve Moorepark at Bascom.
- Aesthetic improvements to San Jose City College.
- Add character to the area.
- The empty lot across the street from the community center should be developed.
- There should be housing for students.

Vision for the Urban Village:

- Less industrial.
- A “mixed” community.
- Enhanced the Bascom Community Center.
- Multiple stories and mixed-use.
- Retail and commercial but no offices.
- There should be a high rise next to the VTA stop.
- Retail and arts and a wide sidewalk.

Discussions about height:

- A high rise (20 stories) at either end of the corridor.
- Four to five stories along South Bascom.
- Mixed use with underground parking is preferred.
- Cluster offices together and away from residential.
- There should be a park strip behind multi-story buildings separating them from the existing residential.
- Terraced tower on the former Dick’s Center site.

Exercise:

- Save the Zorba’s sign.
- High rise building on San Jose Water Company site.
- Playing fields on the property south of the Bascom Community Center.
- Build a median on South Bascom Avenue with trees.



Growth strategy

Table #3 had a very interesting growth strategy that consisted of mostly residential development and very little office and retail space. This group focused a large portion of their residential development in areas adjacent to the light rail stop in the form of a mid-rise building surrounding a park. The group also chose to locate mid-rise courtyard style mid-rise development around a park and underground parking on the lot currently owned by San Jose Water Company. The group also made the corridor primarily residential bordering the street with surface parking and parks behind the residential buildings. A small amount of retail space is intermixed with the residential buildings. The group envisioned a corridor that does not have tall buildings except at either end of the corridor. There is also a very small amount of office space located near the Valley Medical Center and San Jose City College.

Table #5

Assets:

- Valley Medical Center.
- Bascom Community Center and Library.
- San Jose City College.
- Proximity to Campbell (Whole Foods, etc.).
- Los Gatos Creek Trail.
- VTA light rail stop.
- Access to services (Laundromats, stores).
- Proximity to highways.
- Proximity overall (Santana Row).
- Diversity of shops.
- Two large property owners: Valley Medical Center and San Jose City College.
- Bascom Avenue is well-known.

Opportunities:

- Dick's Center site could become a mixed-use hub. This should be connected to the VTA stop.
- More trees.
- Connect the Urban Village to trails.
- Funky local stores.
- Move bike lanes to center median with a tree canopy.
- Free shuttle from VTA to Valley Medical Center and San Jose City College.
- Traffic calming on Fruitdale Avenue and bike lanes.



Growth strategy:

Table #5's growth strategy focused much more growth in the southern end of the corridor than the northern end. This group created a large development of midrise buildings containing residential and office uses with ground floor retail. They also intermixed parking structures and park space into the envisioned development and around the VTA light rail stop. Their vision for most of the corridor was to have mid-rise predominantly residential buildings with ground floor retail. The group chose to add some residential and office development around the northern edge of the boundary, but for the most part the group chose to leave this area as is. One interesting proposal from this group was a linear park down the middle of South Bascom Avenue.

Table #6

Changes:

- There needs to be changes made to Dick's Center.

Vision:

- Slow down traffic.
- More of a Willow Glen or Campbell feel.
- More Crosswalks.
- Destination retail/ commercial clusters.
- Bike friendly.
- Trees, greenery.



Growth Strategy:

Table #6's growth strategy placed their Lego in a consistent development pattern along South Bascom. The group interspersed a number of different uses into a variety of mixed-use buildings. Many of the buildings contain residential uses above ground floor retail. Intermixed with the taller midrise buildings are two story office and retail buildings. Unlike many of the other groups Table #6 did not intensify development around the VTA stop. Instead they proposed low rise residential buildings surrounded by park space. This group was very creative with their use of parks and open space placing them in some unusual places such as on the tops of buildings. For parking, this group seemed to favor surface parking lots setback from the street or used as buffers between new development and existing single family residential.

Table #7

Assets:

- Bascom Community Center and library.
- San Jose City College and Valley Medical Center.
- Light rail.
- High school.

Opportunities:

- Grocery store needed.
- New residential to create more demand for businesses.
- Medical Offices and Valley Medical.
- Dick's Center.

Vision:

- Narrow to two lanes and bring back on street parking.
- More like Lincoln avenue.
- Plant trees, especially near Valley Medical.

- More commercial, including along existing single family dwelling neighborhoods (need deeper lots).
- Winchester Blvd. – Median and street trees.

Height:

- Higher buildings in apartment area south of Fruitdale Avenue.



Growth Strategy:

Table 7's growth strategy was much different than other groups. Where other groups chose have their development line the corridor, Group 7 constructed their developments in a more "stand alone" fashion, as opposed to a line of continuous development. This group also chose to make the land adjacent to the VTA stop a hub of development. Their hub consists mainly of mid-rise residential buildings with some retail directly on South Bascom, parks on either side of the development and parking adjacent to the VTA rail line. Across the street from the residential development the group placed office towers and park space. In the middle of the corridor the group's main land use of choice was residential intermixed with parking and park and open spaces. Finally, the group also added some office towers near the southern boundary of the Urban Village.

South Bascom Workshop Day #2

Assets:

- Continued access to creek trails.
- Community Center/ Library.

- Valley Medical and City College – but the interface with the community needs to be improved.
- The elementary and high schools in the area.
- Racial and economic diversity.
- Mike's Mini Gourmet and Sam's BBQ.

Opportunities:

- A park over Highway 280.
- Create a pedestrian connection between the light rail station and Dick's Center.
- Improve trail access.
- Convert Fruitdale Avenue into a two lane street with a center turn lane.
- Extend the length of the signal at Fruitdale Avenue and Leigh. It's currently too fast for bicycles.
- Improve mid-block pedestrian connections between Del Mar and South Bascom Avenue.
- Add trees along South Bascom Avenue but not palm trees.
- Other than assets mentioned above, almost everything is an opportunity.
- The corridor is too auto oriented.

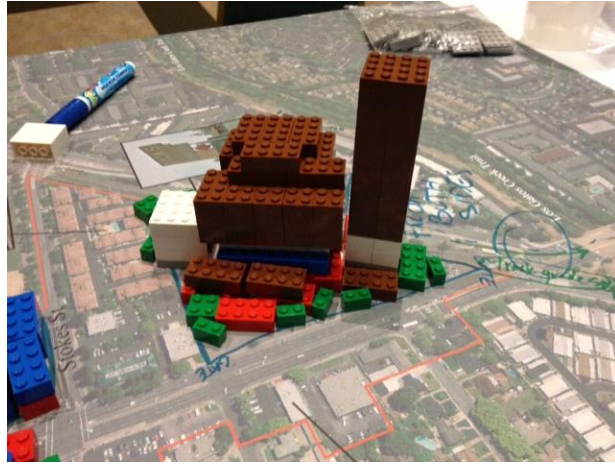
Heights:

- Dick's Center site could support tall buildings.

Exercise:

- Open space should be in the form of playing fields.
- Open space to connect South Bascom Avenue to Del Mar School.
- European plaza style (ie. Boston Common).
- Alter South Bascom so that the street is curvilinear.
- Increase accessibility between the recently built condo, located on Stokes Street, and the light rail through Dick's Center.
- Save some of the auto repair and light industrial uses.
- Need grass in parks not just the creek trail and other parks.
- Retail and office uses along the street where the San Jose City College is currently located.
- More parking at Valley Medical Centre and a better interface with South Bascom.
- There's not enough parking on Fruitdale Avenue.
- Fruitdale Avenue should be placed on a "road diet". Bicycles, crosswalks and on street parking.
- No podium parking that abuts the street.
- There should be an office complex on the San Jose City College site.
- Towers, 8 to 9 stories tall, should be near San Jose City College site. These towers should be terraced away from the adjacent housing. This site could also contain housing.
- A bulk of the development should be at the transit node.
- There is too much new residential planned.
- If residential is built it should be four or five stories.
- Affordable housing on Fruitdale Avenue could be replaced over time with slightly taller buildings but must include affordable housing units.
- Assisted living facilities near Valley Medical Center.

- When adjacent to single family homes, new development should be stepped down but could go higher when not adjacent to single family homes.
- The existing gas station stays or an alternative use of a similar nature such as a car charging station or bike sharing should replace it
- No left turn options.



Growth Strategy:

The group who participated in the South Bascom Workshop #2 chose a development pattern that focused development in a number of key nodes with little or no development in other areas. The first key node identified by the group was the site adjacent to the VTA light rail stop. On this site, the group chose to build tall residential towers with ground floor retail. The parking for the site would be contained within the residential towers on the second and third floors, along with a stand alone parking structure beside the development. The group also chose to intermix parks and open spaces on the site.

Another node of development that the group identified was the southeast corner of South Bascom and Fruitdale Avenue. The group designated this site for more residential development only this time in the form of midrise buildings with roof-top gardens that cover most of the site. The group designed these buildings so that they are stepped away from the adjacent existing single family residential neighborhood. They also added a park as a buffer between new development and the single family homes.

The final node that the group identified was the land that is currently owned and utilized by the San Jose Water Company. This node consists of both office development, in the form of larger towers, and mid-rise residential development. The group used parks as a buffer between the proposed development and the existing neighborhood behind it.

The group chose to leave the entire stretch of land on the east side of South Bascom Avenue, between Fruitdale Avenue and Dick's Center, as is. The group planned some small developments on the west side of the street between the identified nodes but, they generally stayed consistent with their pattern of nodal development. Additionally, the group chose to make larger parks along the east side of South Bascom, as opposed to smaller parks scattered throughout the development. The group also chose not to add significant retail development to the corridor and chose to focus on residential and office development.